



*Office of the United States Attorney
District of Arizona*

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For Information Contact Public Affairs
SANDY RAYNOR
Telephone: (602) 514-7625
Cell: (602) 525-2681

FORMER U.S. ARMY SOLDIER SENTENCED TO 20 YEARS IN FEDERAL PRISON FOR GIRLFRIEND'S MURDER

Victim was a member of the White Mountain Apache Tribe

PHOENIX – Hunter Hugh Taylor, III, 24, of Phoenix, was sentenced here yesterday by U.S. District Judge David G. Campbell to 20 years in federal prison for the death of his 20-year-old girlfriend, a member of the White Mountain Apache Tribe. Taylor pleaded guilty on July 27, 2007 to Murder, Second Degree.

Months after being discharged from the U.S. Army in Kansas, Taylor moved in with his girlfriend and her family on the White Mountain Apache Reservation. While at the victim's mother's house in Whiteriver, Ariz., Taylor used shoelaces and tied the victim's hands behind her back and her ankles together claiming that she was hitting him. In an attempt to restrain her further, he laid on her and squeezed. He claimed that he did not intend to harm her but used strips of duct tape to cover her face and then went to a nearby store for a soda and cigarettes.

After he returned, the victim's mother found her daughter under a blanket with her face completely covered with duct tape. She was not breathing and was later pronounced dead at the hospital. The medical examiner determined that the victim died of compressional asphyxia and probable suffocation due to the tape that covered her mouth and nose.

Despite Taylor's adamant claim that the death was an accident, Judge Campbell found that it was a deliberative act based on the restraint of the victim and the use of the duct tape. The Judge also considered the defense claim of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) as a mitigating factor and ordered counseling for Taylor during imprisonment and upon his release.

The investigation in this case was conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the White Mountain Apache Police Department. The prosecution was handled by Vincent Q. Kirby, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Phoenix.

CASE NUMBER: CR-06-777-PCT-DGC
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